APPENDUM B

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Now, having reached age ninety, I am asked by my friend, Dr Donard de Cogan, to furnish enough autobiographical material to help explain away the Annotated History, written in my late thirties.

Preparation.

The short period of my activity as a wireless amateur in Newport-Middletown is covered in my Newport Historical Society manuscript: "Amateur Wireless Watch Over Atlantic Sea-Lanes, Newport, 1908-1911." I was 12 in 1908 and in short pants.

We were able to take advantage of Newport's proximity to US Navy activity, and to coastwise and trans-Atlantic steamer routes. We had to become adept in two codes: American Morse (Navy and coast-wise) and Continental Morse (Marconi trans-Atlantic) codes.

Then it was but a short step to convert that skill to money-of-sorts, by going to work in spare time and summer vacations for Postal Telegraph-Cable Company, as a landline Morse telegraph operator: first at Newport, later at Worcester, Massachusetts, where, in 1914-1917, I attained Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Western Union hired me there as an Engineering Apprentice for its Boston office in 1917-1919, a period in which World War I intervened. My Navy service at that time was not in wireless but in steam. Training at the US Navy Steam School of Stevens Institute of Technology at Hoboken, NJ, was followed by assignment to USS Louisville, on a transport trip to Liverpool and Brest, in the Boiler and engine rooms.

In 1920, after having completed my apprenticeship to Western Union at Boston, I was transferred to the Vice President Traffic's office at New York headquarters. My title and duties were changed to General Inspector in 1922, and to General Traffic Supervisor, Cable System, in 1927-1936. It was in the latter period that I wrote the Annotated History.

A Sense
of Participation.

One found one-self immersed in the making of history. Hearings before Congressional and government regulatory bodies in Washington commanded the great respect of the various competing American telegraph, telephone, cable, and radio companies. Newcomb Carlton, President of Western Union was our company's headliner. Like his counterparts, he testified under oath. Participants almost inevitably introduced Exhibits, copies of contracts, and so on, to support their assertions. No effort was spared by their staffs in the preparation of testimony and exhibits.

The hearings in Washington were recorded by stenographers, by stenotype, and by overnight transcriptions from wax recordings, and distributed the following day for corrections. At the conclusion of the hearing, the testimony would be printed in bound books. I had such a set of books for use during the writing and typing of Annotated History, but had to surrender them to my successors upon my retirement from Western Union at the end of 1959. Is is primarily the Annotations, so derived, which lend my History credibility.

A Facile Pen.

In Rogers High School, Newport, I had been taught English by a gifted teacher, Kate Clarke, whose influence was still dominant even after English instruction at Worcester Tech. My initial output was newspaper handouts which I prepared in connection with my engineer- recruitment for the company at American colleges.

Technical articles for engineering society publications followed. In 1954 I wrote the article "Radio" for Encyclopaedia Britannica, in 1970 the current article "Telegraph;" in 1959 my most ambitious technical piece, the chapter on "Wire Telegraph" for McGraw-Hill's Radio Engineering Handbook. In 1962 came "The Compatible Technologies of Wire and Radio", for IRE's 50th- anniversary issue of the Proceedings.

If asked to name my own favourites, I would pick two pieces I wrote for IEEE: one, the Centennial Special, on the interplay between electricity and civilization, entitled "Variations of a Theme by Oppenheimer," in IEEE Spectrum, February 1984; the other, "Ten Vignettes of an Engineering Institute", in Proceedings of the IEEE, September 1976.

But a good proportion of my writing for Western Union was pamphleteering directed towards international mergers of American telegraph, cable, and radiotelegraph companies.

Speeches eventually commanded comparable wordage, especially those delivered during my year as president of the Institute of Radio Engineers.

Intermeshing and Expanding Interests.

My boss, Emmett R Shute, later vice-president of WU, pushed me into membership and committee work in the engineering societies, IRE and AIEE. I have never ceased advocating similar steps for an engineer to broaden interests and personal associations beyond the precincts of an employing company. In my case it resulted in my becoming president of IRE in 1951, and, upon my retirement from WU, in my serving three years on the paid staff of AIEE. With the experience came honours; and these were broadened as I joined some of the old-timers' organizations.

Extrapolating upon my World War I Navy service, in 1937-1940 I became Executive Officer, master-control radiotelegraph station NDB of the Navy Communication Reserve, in the Third Naval District, New York City. During World War II, I functioned as Liaison Officer between Navy and Western Union in New York and Washington. I was promoted to Commander, USN, in 1952; and retired from the Navy in 1957.

Going "back home", in Middletown, RI, from the New York area in 1975, I turned my attention abruptly to genealogy and Colonial history, combining them in a 2-volume bound manuscript, "By-Paths of Descent", now in Newport Historical Society. That may be as good a place as any to stop writing autobiography.

Bare Bones Facts.

Born, Middletown-Newport, RI, 30 September 1896.

Son of Benjamin B and Minnie Louise (Stoddard) Coggeshall.

Education: Newport public schools and high school. Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 3 years. Non-graduate; Doctor of Engineering (honorary) WPI 1951.

At Western Union headquarters, New York (residence, Maywood, NJ)

1920	-	Engineering Assistant
1922	-	General Inspector landline system
1927	-	General Traffic Supervisor, ocean cable system
1936	-	General Cable Supervisor; directing the work of 600 cable operators and electrical technicians in US, Cuba, Canada, United Kingdom Frane, Holland, Belgium.
1946	-	General Traffic manager, International Communications. Under K Bruce Mitchell, Director of International Communications, cable operations became a line function, replacing former staff function of landlines/cables.
1952	-	Director of Planning, International Communications.
1957	-	Director International Communications.
1959	-	Assistant Vice President. Retired December 31.
1939-1953	-	Director, Mexican Telegraph co.
1940-1947	-	Board of War Communications, Cable Committee, Washington.
1957-1959	-	Executive Reserve, Office of Civil Defense Mobilization.
1959-1961	-	National Industry Advisory committee to Federal Communication Commission, Washington.
1960-1962	-	Staff of AIEE, New York" Manager Technical Operations Services.
1966-1972	-	Editor, IEEE Newsletter, "Electrical Engineering.
1978	-	IEEE Haraden Pratt Award.
1979	-	Antique Wireless Association, Houck Award for Documentation.
1984	-	Fellow, Radio Club of America
1984	-	IEEE Centennial Medal.
1985	-	IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society, Distinguished Service Award.

- End of Autobiography -